

COMIC SHOP NEWS



Avatar of the Futurians

The most feared place in Gotham City
contains the Dark Knight's most psychotic foes.

ARKHAM ASYLUM

MADNESS

Can you survive 24 hours inside
without going insane?

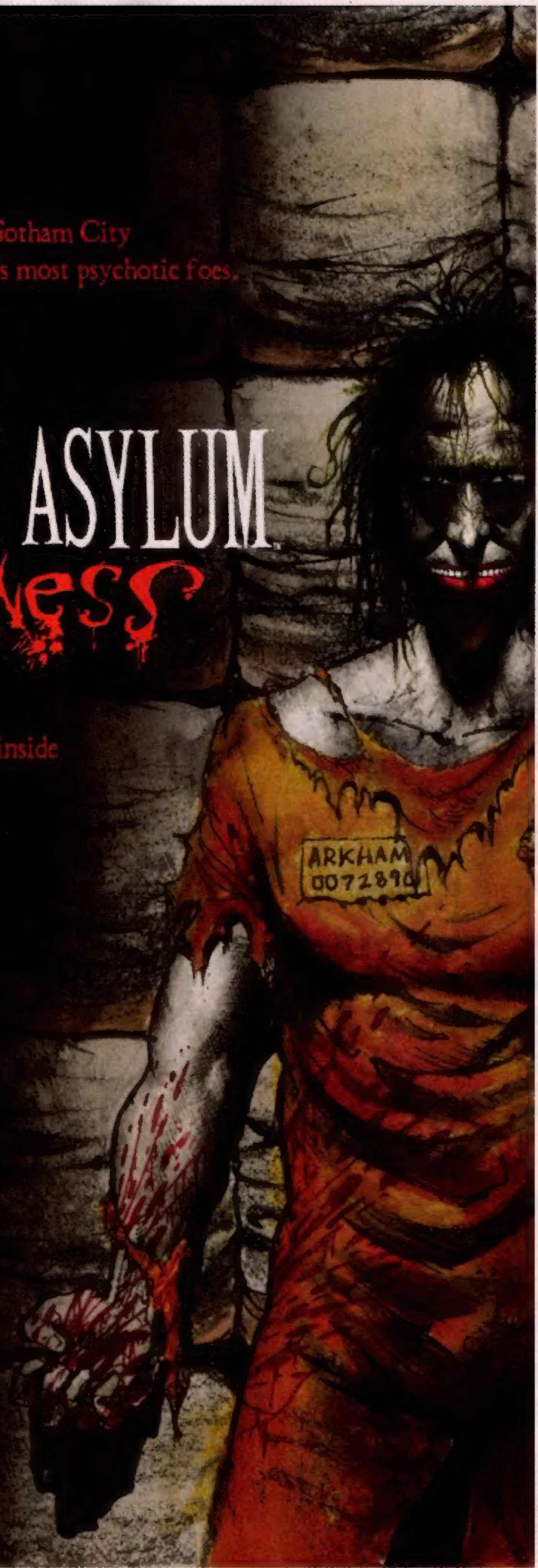
An Original Graphic Novel
Written & Illustrated by
SAM KIETH

JUNE 2010



dccomics.com

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Lots of us have at one time or another dreamed of continuing the work of one of our comic book idols. A few of us actually get to do it.

David Miller is one of those few.

Miller has been an avid fan of the work of Dave Cockrum for decades. "When I was ten years old, I encountered Dave Cockrum's work in the pages of *The Legion of Super-Heroes*. In that one moment I instantly became a fan of comics and of Dave Cockrum and consumed with the desire to work in the comics industry. Dave was my idol and my inspiration..."

So what better way to celebrate his idol's creativity than by continuing one of Cockrum's most ambitious creations, *The Futurians*?

For readers who know little about Cockrum other than his seminal work on *Legion of Super-Heroes*, *Avengers*, and *X-Men*, Miller offered some background. "The *Futurians* is about our Earth of the distant future about to



between these two."

What led Miller to focus on *Avatar* rather than on the entire group of characters? "I honestly believe that each of the *Futurians* could carry his or her own miniseries or one-shot, and I would like to see them developed thusly before having them interact as a team again. That said, the character of *Avatar* has always been my favorite. He is just bursting with potential. And I wanted the reader to get to know him as a person and not just the big gun of the *Futurians*."

"There are so many kinds of stories you can do with him. Andrew Pendragon was impressive before Vandervecken ever empowered him. He is an immortal who's had countless adventures through history before we even meet him. The pre-*Avatar* Pendragon is just as interesting as the super-powered Pendragon."

"I love the *Highlander* series, and *Avatar* is an immortal that predates *Highlander*. So, to paraphrase

Back to the Futurians

end. The bad guys of the story escape to their past—our present—to leave the good guys to die. The good guys can only send one agent back in time to confront the bad guys. But they are also able to send genetic 'time-bombs' into the past that will mutate humans into super-beings.

"The time-traveling good guy collects the affected subjects and ignites their super-powers, creating the *Futurians*. The story arc of the graphic novels introduces the characters, and ends with the time-traveling bad guys being neutralized."

"The *Futurians* was part of Marvel's graphic novel/creator owned initiative of the 80's. They appeared in Marvel Graphic Novel #9. For whatever reasons, the series did not continue at Marvel. Cockrum retained ownership of the characters and continued to publish them with different publishers. Because of the vagaries of the economy and the comics industry in general, I think Cockrum put *The Futurians* aside to take paying work until the time of his death—although that's a very simplistic summary of events."

How'd Miller land the rights to produce his own *Futurians* project? "Shortly after Dave Cockrum died, I came into contact with Cockrum's agent, Clifford Meth. I mentioned that I'd love to option the *Futurians* to do new comics

material with them. He agreed to listen to my offer. My first pitch was passed on. Then, a couple of years later we bumped into each other online and I mentioned I was still interested in the *Futurians*. I made a second pitch, and this one was accepted by the Cockrum estate."

Miller summarized his comics background, and explained how he moved into publishing. "I had a very traditional start in comics. I did some black and white comics and then I apprenticed with a wonderful artist by the name of Bob Downs. He was an inker, but the thing that impressed me the most was that he was in the first *John Buscema* Comics Workshop class. As a thirteen year old I begged my parents to send me there. To actually meet a graduate of the workshop floored me. I was working for him and other artists during the comics boom of the 90's, and later worked as an inker."

"When the comics bust of the '90's happened, I went into commercial illustration, including doing commercial comics for clients such as Bell Telephone and the Academy for Educational Development. There's also a cottage industry of filmwriters who like to turn their scripts into graphic novels to better sell them."

"Around that time, I started self-publishing again. I was basically doing counter-programming. Whatever the mainstream was doing, I did the opposite. When everything was grim-n-gritty I did my all ages book *Cliff Diver, Professional Teen Cliff Diver*. When the focus was on the artist, I showed-cased writers in my *Writer's Block* anthology."

"And now I'm doing my dream project: *The Futurians*. It was Dave Cockrum's work that inspired me to work in comics. I feel I've come full circle and am having the time of my life."

Is Miller working with any representatives of Cockrum's literary estate in producing his *Futurians* project? "Only insofar as all my publishing plans have been submitted to *Paty Cockrum* through her agent for approval. Once I was given story approval, *Paty* has been very hands-off. That said, both she and Clifford Meth have been very generous with advice on how to help the book. We are all united in putting out the best series possible for the fans."

Miller's limited series, *Avatar of the Futurians*, focuses on one of the most powerful of Cockrum's Futurian heroes. In Cockrum's tales, *Avatar* was one of the few to break free of the influence of the villainous Vandervecken. Will his relationship with Vandervecken and other *Futurians* play a role in this series? "We definitely acknowledge the adversarial nature of Vandervecken and *Avatar's* relationship," Miller said. "But it is only one small part of this miniseries. We basically plant the seeds for a future confrontation

Cockrum, you can do *Highlander* type stories with him, you can do super-hero type stories with him, you can do science fiction type stories with him—and of course, you can do

Futurian stories with him! I liken him to a cross between *Highlander* and *Captain Britain*, while basically pre-dating both."

Fans who enjoy DC's *Brightest Day* and Marvel's *Heroic Age* will find plenty to like in *Avatar of the Futurians*. "The Big Two are currently emphasizing their return to heroic status of their characters," Miller said. "This is what the *Futurians* have always been about. There is no need to 'return' to the *Futurians*' heroic roots, because they never left!"

Miller is keeping *Avatar of the Futurians* an one-man production as much as possible. "I am both the writer and the illustrator of the miniseries," Miller said. "Greg LaRocque has done an outstanding cover for the first issue. I met Greg a few years ago and we've often spoken about doing something together. *The Futurians* seemed the perfect opportunity."

"I have found that there are many fine artists who want to work on this project because of their love and respect for Dave Cockrum. Mike Netzer has done a tremendous cover for *Avatar of the Futurians* #2, and Joe Rubinstein has come on as series inker with the second issue."

Is this a standalone book, or is the first of several *Futurians* projects from Miller's company? "Stay tuned—those announcements will soon be forthcoming!"

And is there any chance that the earlier *Futurians* material by Dave Cockrum might come back into print? "That's a question for the Cockrum estate—but as a fan of the series, I certainly hope so!"

Avatar of the Futurians #1, a full-color \$3.99 comic, is scheduled for early July release from David Miller Studios.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!





One and One and One Is Three...

For almost fifty years, they've been the Fantastic Four. But this fall, they'll be the Fantastic Three...

Beginning with *Fantastic Four* #583, Jonathan Hickman & Steve Epting kick off the six-part story arc "Three," which centers on the death of one of the Marvel's superhero family. "There's a reason we're calling the arc 'Three,'" Hickman told *Comic Shop Newsarama's* Vaneeta Rogers. "One member of the Fantastic Four will have breathed their last."

"Three" is a cosmic, star-spanning Fantastic Four story with consequences," the writer said. "And more importantly, it's the first time we see Doom in our *Fantastic Four*."

The death of a member of Marvel's flagship quartet (actually occurs at the end of the "War of 4 Cities" arc that precedes "Three") is no dream or hoax, Hickman stresses. "It's real. You can't do these things without there being some weight to it."

"Three" launches a new arc, introduces a new lineup, and premieres a new artist as Epting takes over. "Steve actually lives near me, so we had dinner and talked about plans for the book and where we're headed. He already has a script and is already working on the book. He's turned in some beautiful pages. So my position on Steve is, we're stoked! I'm loving the work he's doing. He's fantastic. He's a consummate professional. I've seen what he's drawing on *Fantastic Four*, and I can tell you that Steve can do this story and do it beautifully..."

Epting is looking forward to working

with Hickman on FF. "I was first drawn to Jonathan's work because of his great design skill," the artist said. "I bought the first issue of *The Nightly News* purely because I loved the way it looked. I have a graphic design background and I was really impressed by the sort of whole new visual language Jonathan brought to comics in that series. It's been great to see get more attention and to now have the opportunity to work with him."



Hickman describes "Three" as "the summation of everything we've done to this point, culminating with a tragic series of events whenever all of the pieces that we've put on the table so far start to fall apart."

"It's a week in the life of the Fantastic Four. It takes place in New Atlantis and the Negative Zone, and some of it in the Abandoned City of the High Evolutionary, and some of it takes place on Nu-Earth, or Nu-World, as we're calling it now."

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"We'll also use 'Three' to push the book back into more of a Marvel-centric kind of series. It feels like the FF has been isolated, on its own, for a very long time -- certainly since *Civil War*. We want to push it back into Marvel central, and to do that, we're going to have to tell stories that deserve that scope."

Hickman acknowledges that "Three" is his first major *Fantastic Four* arc--and that's by intent. "I think if you look at my entire run so far on FF, I think you could say we have told only one story so far that had an arc, and that was the first three issues. That was Reed and his dad and the Council and that kind of stuff."



"Everything else after that has really been a series of one-shots, even though we grouped the Four Cities stuff into a collection called 'Prime Elements,' and we marketed it as the Four Cities. They're really all stand-alone issues. 'Three' is our first broad story arc of the series. It's six issues."

Hickman said that his initial avoidance of the standard four-to-six-issue arc was "a very conscious decision. The number of

single issues we've done

has been very intentional. I wanted an arc to feel like an arc. If you do big arc after big arc after big arc, they just become monotonous. I know we live in a trade culture, which is fantastic because, while it has its detriments, people read your work in a broader way, in a broader audience. But you have to look at these things as super-stories as well, collections of trades."

"I had a thirty-issue outline when I got the gig. And we're on course. I have always thought the book should be about ideas, and about characters. I think those are the two things the *Fantastic Four* should be about, and I feel like that's what we've done with the book. I'm proud of what we've done so far."

"We've got a lot of pretty big milestones that are coming up to. We've got *Fantastic Four* #600, and we've got the 50th anniversary. There's just so much big stuff we're doing on the back end of this that I feel like we had to have both the elements to play with that weren't in play in the rest of the Marvel Universe, and I felt like we also had to reintroduce the big, key characters, like Namor and Doom and the Inhumans, in a fresh, new way, or else it's just another one of those stories. We've been building a lot, and I've hinted at some even cooler things to come."

CSNsider

• Now this is a popular war! *Superman: War of the Supermen* #s 3 & 4 have both sold out (as did #s 1 & 2); to satisfy reader demand, DC is rushing into print the 56-page *Superman: War of the Supermen Double Feature* #2 collecting both issues. The book, featuring pickup cover art by Eddy Barrows, is slated to arrive in stores next week. (And in case you forgot, DC has collected the sold-out first two issues in *War of the Supermen Double Feature* #1, which reached comic shops last week.)

• Joe Quesada has been promoted to Chief Creative Officer at Marvel Entertainment; he'll report to Executive Vice President Alan Fine. According to Marvel, Quesada's role is to "ensure that all portrayals of Marvel's characters and storytelling remain true to the essence of Marvel's rich history. Additionally, Quesada will provide creative oversight of all areas of Marvel's business

SPIDER-MAN

BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER



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including theatrical, television, publishing, animation and games, while also actively participating in all story and script development for Marvel's films and animation." He will also continue as editor-in-chief of Marvel Publishing.



• Rich Johnston's Bleeding Cool website reports that *Wetworks* is returning in September in the WildStorm oneshot *Wetworks: Mutations*, courtesy of writers Kevin Greivoux & Christopher Long.

• Comics artist and writer Stephen Perry, well known for his *Time Spirits* series as well as his work on the animated *Thundercats*, was murdered in late May at the age of 56. Police are holding two persons of interest on unrelated charges.

• WizKids/NECA has announced a licensing agreement with CBS Consumer Products that will bring *Star Trek HeroClix* to the growing line of miniature click-base games. The company has secured rights to produced Clix figures based on all of the *Star Trek* television shows and *Star Trek* feature films. "*Star Trek* changed the way people think about the future," said WizKids/



NECA President Lax Chandra. "We are thrilled at the opportunity to marry our innovative game design and exceptional miniatures with the incredibly rich *Star Trek* franchise. We believe HeroClix and the *Star Trek* Universe are ideally suited for cooperative gaming and table top miniature simulation and will speak to gamers in a new and compelling way." Look for the first releases late this year, with additional expansions in 2011 and beyond.

• A group of Japanese and US publishers have joined forces to shut down a growing manga piracy problem that threatens the existence of legitimate manga publishers.

Participants in the coalition include the 36 members of Japan's Digital Comic Association, Square Enix, Viz Media, TokyoPop, Vertical, Inc., the Tuttle-Mori Agency and Yen Press.

"It is unfortunate that this action has become necessary," the group said in their press release. "However, to protect the intellectual property rights of our creators and the overall health of our industry, we are left with no other alternative but to take aggressive action..."

Following closely behind an earlier action by DC, Marvel, and many other publishers to shut down a website hosting illegal scans of thousands of comics, this is further proof that publishers are taking illegal scans and pirated comics very seriously.

• Moonstone ventures into the horror anthology field in October with the debut of *Bedtime Stories for Impressionable Children*, featuring new tales by James Kuhoric, Robert Timnell, Mark Wheatley, & JC Vaughn. The tales are "told" by Alonzo Del Vecchio, a former construction worker forced by the tough economy to become a babysitter. And as you might suspect, these are very inappropriate bedtime stories...

• And speaking of horror, Bluewater Productions is adding an offbeat horror title to its lineup with the debut of *Nanny & Hank* by Mark L. Miller & Steve Babb. The August-release first issue introduces an elderly couple adjusting to their new lives as septuagenarian vampires. Even worse, the couple has to embark on a family vacation without alerting their children and grandchildren to the fact that they now need human blood to survive.



afterword by Scott Snyder; a sketchbook section featuring Rafael Albuquerque's cover sketches and character designs; and sample script pages by Snyder and King, along with the corresponding art by Albuquerque in

black and white. Look for it in comic shops in late September.

• Doug Mahnke is supplying the art for a 1-for-25 variant cover edition of *Green Lantern* #55, in stores next week.

• Marvel has added a 1-for-10 *Chris Bachalo* variant cover edition of *X-Men: Curse of the Mutants—Storm & Gambit*; look for the standard edition and the variant in stores in early August.

• David Finch is supplying the art for the 1-for-50 variant cover edition of *X-Men: Second Coming* #2, slated for mid-July release. (As with any variant of this rarity,

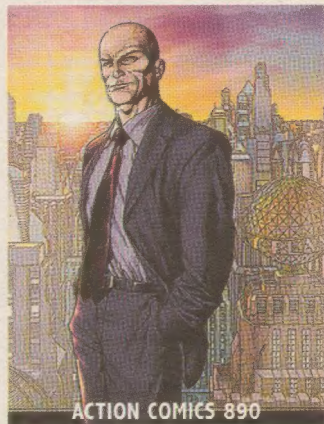
it's best to check with your friendly neighborhood comic shop for price and availability.)

• Doug Braithwaite is the new penciller for *Thor* #614.

• In addition to reprinting the first five issues of the hit Vertigo series, *American Vampire Volume 1 HC* will include numerous previously-unannounced bonus features, including all five variant covers by Jim Lee, Bernie Wrightson, Andy Kubert, J.H. Williams III, and Paul Pope; an introduction by Stephen King; an afterword by Scott Snyder; a sketchbook section featuring Rafael Albuquerque's cover sketches and character designs; and sample script pages by Snyder and King, along with the corresponding art by Albuquerque in

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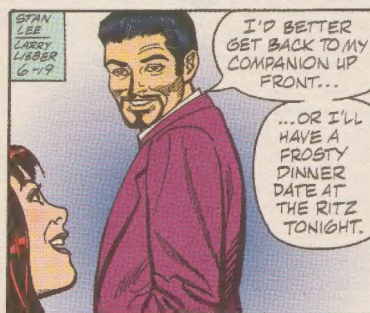
• David Finch is supplying the cover art for the previously-unannounced 1-for-10 variant edition of *Action Comics* #890.

• Francis Manapul is the artist for the previously-unannounced 1-for-10 variant cover edition of *Justice League of America* #46, in stores next week.

Back to Press

- *Avengers* #1 John Romita Jr. 2nd Printing (APR108176), in stores 7/8.
- *Avengers* #1 Blank 2nd Printing (APR108177), in stores 7/8.
- *Avengers Academy* #1 2nd Printing (APR108261), in stores 7/8.
- *Avengers Prime* #1 2nd Printing (APR108262), in stores 7/8.
- *Batman: Return of Bruce Wayne* #2 2nd

Continued on page 6



THE MA OF STEE

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI takes on

Wonder ★ Woman

An all-new era begins in #601

Illustrated by
DON KRAMER



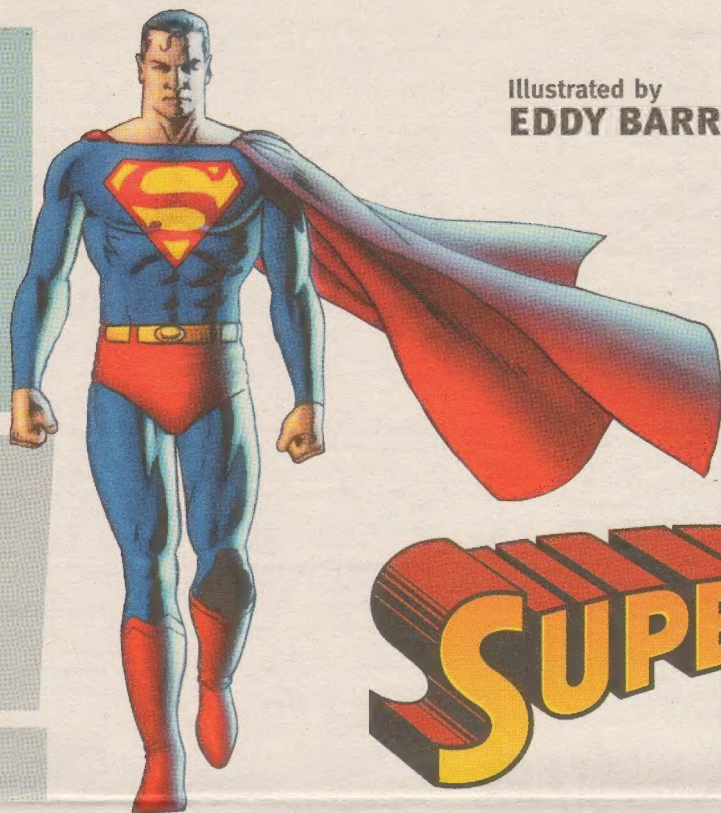
J. MICHAEL



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Illustrated by
EDDY BARROWS

Covers by
JOHN CASSADAY

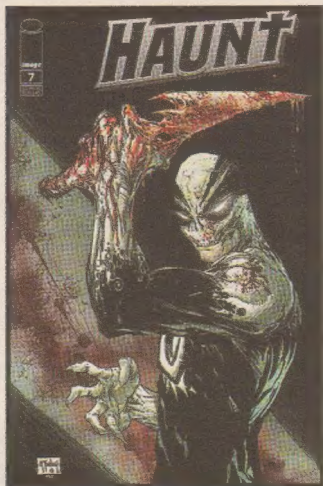
SUPERMAN

The epic story "Grounded"
begins in #701

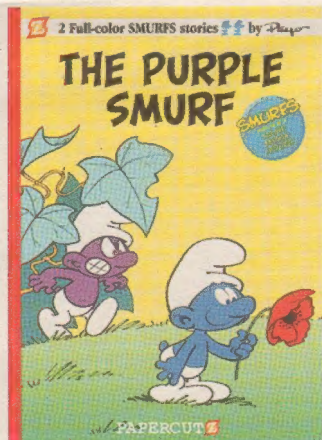
EL STRACZYNSKI takes on

ARRIOR!

Printing (APR108255), featuring a recolored version of the original cover by Andy Kubert, in stores 6/30.



- **Haunt #7 2nd Printing** (APR108137), in stores this week.
- **Hawkeye & Mockingbird #1 2nd Printing** (APR108263), in stores 7/8.
- **Secret Avengers #1 2nd Printing** (APR108169), in stores 7/8.
- **Thanos Imperative #1 2nd Printing** (APR108264), in stores 7/8.
- **Thunderbolts #144 2nd Printing** (APR108163), in stores 7/8.
- **Young Allies #1 2nd Printing** (APR108267), in stores 7/8.



Smurf's Up!

For years, English-language readers have searched in vain for material featuring the Smurfs—and later this year, their search will be successful, thanks to PaperCutz! The publisher will kick off its Smurfs line in September with *The Purple Smurf*, a story never available in English until now, as well as *The Smurfs and the Magic Flute*, the first comics story in which the characters appeared. Three months later, the line continues with *The Smurf King*. All three books will be offered in both softcover and hardcover; each book presents material by Yoan Delporte & Peyo. This *Smurfs* resurgence

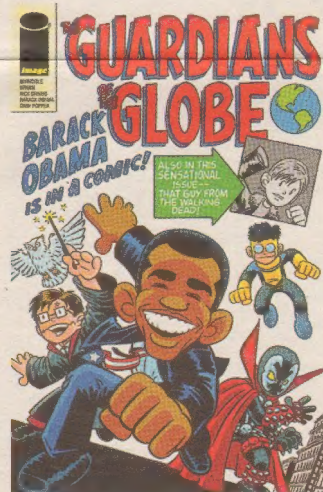
comes about in advance of the upcoming *Smurfs* live action/CGI feature film starring Neal Patrick Harris & Sofia Vergara and a bunch of little blue animated guys 'n' gals; look for the film in the summer of 2011, along with several more *Smurfs* volumes between now and then.

Obama Backup Plan

In their initial teaser campaign for the supergroup team-up title *Guardians of the Globe*, Image hinted at a team comprised of Invincible, Spawn, Rick Grimes (from *Walking Dead*), Gary Popper, and Barack Obama. Well, as it turned out, that wasn't the lineup—the real time is comprised of Brit, Outrun, Kaboomerang, Yeti, and Bulletproof—but in response to the positive fan response to that original lineup, Chris Giarrusso is featuring those very characters in a series of one-page backup tales in each issue of *Guardians of the Globe*.

"The response to the *Guardians of the Globe* teasers was astounding," miniseries co-writer Robert Kirkman said. "So many people wanted to see a *Guardians* team made up of Invincible, Spawn, Rick Grimes, Barack Obama, and Gary Popper. Ask, and you will receive!"

"I'll be featuring President Barack Obama in a comic. As far as I know, this is something that has never been done before. A move like this is bound to stir up a lot of heated controversy, but I have the opportunity to do something historically groundbreaking in these strips," writer / artist Chris Giarrusso joked.



Guardians of the Globe #1, written by Robert Kirkman & Benito Cereno and illustrated by Ransom Getty with a single-page backup tale by Chris Giarrusso, is slated for late August release.

Eagle Nominees Announced

The 2010 Eagle Awards nominees have been announced, and now it's your turn to help determine the winners! The Eagles, like the People's Choice Awards, are voted on by fans and readers like you and me—and you can cast your vote at

<http://www.eagleawards.co.uk/vote.aspx>

Voting closes at midnight (British Summer Time) on Sunday July 4, 2010, so why not go ahead and vote now? Here are the nominees from which you can choose your faves:

Favorite Newcomer Writer

- Al Ewing
- Jonathan Hickman
- Kathryn Immonen
- Kieron Gillen
- Mike Lynch

Favorite Newcomer Artist

- David Lafuente
- Declan Shalvey
- Jamie McKelvie
- John Cullen
- Matt Timson

Favorite Writer

- Alan Moore
- Geoff Johns
- John Wagner
- Tony Lee
- Warren Ellis

Favorite Writer/Artist

- Bryan Lee O'Malley
- Darwyn Cooke
- David Mazzucchelli
- John Byrne (nomination withdrawn at Mr Byrne's request)
- Paul Grist

Favorite Artist: Pencils

- Frank Quitely
- Guy Davis
- Ivan Reis
- J.H. Williams III
- Stuart Immonen

Favorite Artist: Inks

- Butch Guice
- Charlie Adlard
- Gary Erskine
- Kevin O'Neil
- Mark Farmer

Favorite Artist: Fully-Painted Artwork

- Adi Granov
- Alex Ross
- Ben Templesmith
- J.H. Williams III
- James Jean

Favorite Colorist

- Ben Templesmith
- Christina Strain
- Dave Stewart
- Laura Martin
- Len O'Grady

Favorite Letterer

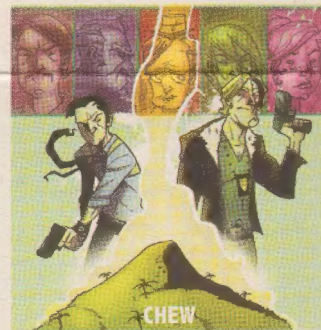
- Annie Parkhouse
- Chris Eliopoulos
- Nate Piekos (Blambot)
- Richard Starkings (Comicroft)
- Simon Bowland
- Todd Klein

Favorite Editor

- Axel Alonso
- Matt Smith
- Nick Lowe
- Stephen Wacker
- Tom Brevoort

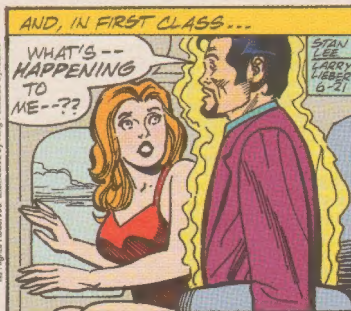
Favorite Publisher

- DC / Vertigo / WildStorm
- IDW
- Image Comics
- Marvel
- Rebellion / 2000AD



Favorite American Color Comic Book

- B.P.R.D.
- Batman and Robin
- Captain Britain and MI13
- Chew
- Doctor Who
- Phonogram - The Singles Club
- Scalped





Favorite British Color Comic Book

- 2000AD
- Spandex
- The Beano
- The Dead: Kingdom Of Flies
- The DFC

Favorite American Black and White Comic Book

- I Kill Giants
- Scott Pilgrim
- The Venger: Dead Man Rising
- Usagi Yojimbo
- Walking Dead

Favorite British Black and White Comic Book

- Chloe Noonan
- Dragon Heir
- Futurequake
- Space Babe 113
- Whatever Happened To The World's Fastest Man?

Favorite New Comic Book

- Batman and Robin
- Chew
- Doctor Who
- Ri Ra
- Unwritten

Favorite Manga

- Fullmetal Alchemist
- GoGo Monster
- Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service
- Pluto
- Reya

Favorite European Comic Book

- Chimpanzee Complex
- Largo Winch
- L'Histoire Secrete
- Requiem Chevalier Vampire
- Ri Ra

Favorite Single Story Published During 2009

- Doctor Who: The Time Machination
- Doctor Who: Black Death White Life
- From the Pages of Bram Stoker's Dracula: Harker
- Phonogram The Singles Club 4: Konichiva Bitches
- R.E.B.E.L.S. Annual #1: Starro the Conqueror

Comic Shop News

Favorite Continued Story Published During 2009

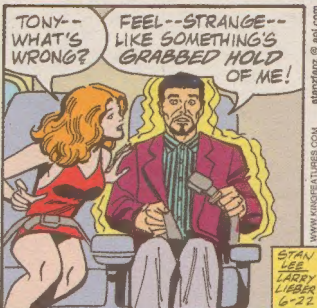
- Doctor Who: The Forgotten
- Judge Dredd: Tour of Duty
- Phonogram: The Singles Club
- Scalped #19-24: "The Gravel in your Gut"
- Walking Dead #61-65: "Fear The Hunters"

Favorite Cover Published During 2009 (in case of more than one cover, the nominated cover is identified by artist)

- 2000AD #1631 (D'Israeli/Dirty Frank)
- Batgirl #2
- Batman & Robin #4 (Frank Quitely)
- Batman and Robin #3
- Doctor Who: The Forgotten #6

Favorite Original Graphic Novel Published During 2009

- Asterios Polyp
- Grandville
- League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: Century
- Mouse Guard: Winter 1152
- The Hunter



Colors: Ward Batty

Favorite Reprint Compilation

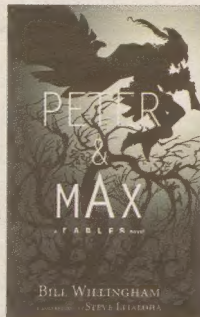
- Captain Britain by Alan Moore & Alan Davis Omnibus
- Charley's War: Underground and Over the Top
- Doctor Who: The Forgotten
- Saga of the Swamp Thing
- The Rocketeer: The Complete Adventures

Favorite Magazine about Comics

- Back Issue
- Comics International
- Comics Journal
- Tripwire
- Wizard

Favorite Comics-Related Book

- Comic Book Design (Gary Millidge)
- Peter and Max
- The Insider's Guide to Creating Comics and Graphic Novels - Andy Schmidt
- The Marvel Art of Marko Djurdjevic
- War Stories (Mike Conroy)



Favorite Comics Related Website

- 2000ad online
- Bleedingcool.com
- comicbookresources.com
- Forbidden Planet International Blog
- Newsarama



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Favorite Web-Based Comic

- Freak Angels
- Order of the Stick
- PVP
- Sin Titulo
- xkcd.com



Favorite Comics-Related Movie or TV Show

- Heroes
- Smallville
- Surrogates
- The Big Bang Theory
- Watchmen

Roll of Honor

- Brian Bolland
- Dick Giordano
- Joe Kubert
- John Hicklenton
- Peter David

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